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AUTHOR	Russell, Ann; Gadberry, Lowell
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ABSTRACT

The first of two papers summarizes results of a survey of students (N=707) at Southwestern Oklahoma State University during Spring, 2000 on their opinion of faculty evaluations. A majority of students believed that faculty evaluations are important enough to read carefully and respond to accurately, are administered in a manner which guards student identity, and are influenced primarily by the faculty member's ability to establish a climate of positive communication. The second paper compares results of the 2000 survey with a similar survey conducted in 1994. Most students in both years agreed that faculty evaluations are used to improve instruction, are administered in a manner guarding student identity, and are given without faculty influence. Reflecting an upward trend of 7-12 percentage points in the 2000 survey, students responded that evaluations are given at the right time of the semester and are an important use of university funds. Downward trends of 4 to 9 percent were seen in response to the statement that "students are influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the by quality of the course" and that "students are influenced by course content more than teacher personality." An attached table details respondent demographics and beliefs. (DB)

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SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Weatherford, Oklahoma
STUDENT OPINION OF FACULTY EVALUATIONS
SPRING 2000

and

STUDENT OPINION OF FACULTY EVALUATIONS
A FIVE YEAR COMPARISON:
FALL 1994 AND SPRING 2000

Submitted by

Dr. Ann Russell

and

Dr. Lowell Gadberry

September 25, 2000

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SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT OPINION OF FACULTY EVALUATIONS
SPRING 2000

METHOD

The Student Opinion of Faculty Evaluations survey was distributed to students in randomly selected sections and completed on a voluntary basis with the approval of faculty members participating in the Spring 2000 evaluation process.

The sample consisted of 707 respondents of which 58 percent were female and 39 percent were male. Degree programs included Arts and Sciences, 29 percent; Business, 9 percent; Education, 20 percent; Health Sciences, 34 percent; and Undecided, 7 percent.

Grade point averages on a 4 point scale included 3.6 to 4.0, 22 percent; 3.1 to 3.5, 32 percent; 2.6 to 3.0, 29 percent; 2.1 to 2.5, 12 percent; and 1.0 to 2.0, 2 percent.

The sample included Freshmen, 28 percent; Sophomores, 20 percent; Juniors, 21 percent; Seniors, 26 percent; and Graduates, 3 percent. One percent of the respondents omitted various content questions, prohibiting the total of 100 percent in those categories.

RESULTS

The analysis of data combined the first two categories of *strongly agree* and *agree* and the last two categories of *strongly disagree* and *disagree*. The undecided category ranged from 9 percent to 32 percent, with a mean of 22 percent.

The students indicated that faculty evaluations *are an important tool to improve instruction* (67 percent), *are important enough to read carefully and respond to accurately* (76 percent), *are administered in a manner which strictly guards student identity* (76 percent), *are given with faculty outside the room and without influence of faculty* (85 percent), and *are given at the appropriate time in the semester* (74 percent).

Results indicated 48 percent of the students responded that evaluations *are needed in every class every semester*, and 44 percent said they *are an important use of university funds*.

The survey revealed that 40 percent believed evaluations *are taken seriously by university faculty*, and 42 percent felt the evaluations *are taken seriously by the students who are responding*.

Results were not clearly delineated on three questions. Sixty-one percent of students believed they *are influenced by teacher personality more than course content* (Agree, 61 percent; Undecided, 21 percent; Disagree 17 percent). In a reverse statement of this question, 28 percent of the students said they *were more influenced by course content than teacher personality*. Results were divided on whether evaluations *are*

influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the quality of the course with Agree, 33 percent; Disagree, 39 percent; and Undecided, 26 percent.

When evaluating faculty, 57 percent of students responded they *are influenced by the ability of the faculty to establish a climate of positive communication more than by the student's grade.*

Students were asked to evaluate the course and the teacher they were currently assessing. Their ratings included Excellent, 32 percent; Very Good, 38 percent; Average, 22 percent; Below Average, 4 percent; and Poor, 2 percent.

SUMMARY

Students believed, demonstrated by Agreement responses above a 50 percent level (ranging from 57 to 85 percent) that faculty evaluations are important enough to read carefully and respond to accurately, are administered in a manner which strictly guards student identity, are given with faculty outside of the room and without influence of faculty, are given at the appropriate time of the semester, and are influenced by the ability of the faculty to establish a climate of positive communication more than by the student's grade.

Students responded with less certainty, demonstrated by Agreement responses below 50 percent (from 40 to 48 percent) that evaluations are needed in every class every semester, are an important use of university funds, are taken seriously by university faculty, and are taken seriously by the students responding.

Results were unclear when students were asked to respond to questions about their beliefs regarding the influence of teacher personality on their evaluations of faculty. Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed they are influenced by teacher personality more than course content. When given a reverse of that question, however, 28 percent agreed and 40 percent disagreed they were influenced by course content more than teacher personality. It is likely that students were influenced by social desirability, a desire by respondents to want to agree with the survey question. This is evidenced in students' apparent strong agreement with the first question and less certain disagreement with the second question.

Results were about evenly split between Agree, Disagree and Undecided as to whether evaluations are influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the quality of the course.

Seventy percent of the students responded that the course and teacher they were evaluating were Very Good to Excellent.

SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT OPINION OF FACULTY EVALUATIONS
A FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON:
1994 AND 2000

METHOD

In a five-year comparison, the 2000 Student Opinion of Faculty Evaluations survey mirrors some but not all of the results of the 1994 survey. Both surveys used the same random sampling method, survey questions, and voluntary faculty participation. The first survey was conducted in the Fall of 1994 when the university was in the beginning phase of faculty evaluation.

The 2000 sample size of 707 is compared to the 1300 respondents in the 1994 study. The 2000 and 1994 samples included degree programs which responded in the following percentage categories including Arts and Sciences, (29 percent compared to 23 percent in 1994); Business, (9 percent compared to 13 percent), Education, (20 percent compared to 29 percent); Health Sciences, (34 percent compared to 29 percent); and Undecided, (7 percent compared to 6 percent).

The 2000 and 1994 samples included student classes of Freshmen, (28 percent compared to 26 percent in 1994); Sophomores, (20 percent compared to 19 percent); Juniors, (21 percent compared to 23 percent); Seniors, (26 percent compared to 28 percent); and Graduate, (3 percent as compared to 5 percent).

RESULTS

More students believed, reflected by an upward trend of one or two percentage points in the survey categories, that faculty evaluations were used *to improve instruction* (67 percent compared to 65 percent in 1994), *were administered in a manner guarding student identity* (76 percent compared to 75 percent), and *were given without faculty influence* (85 percent compared to 84 percent). See Table 1.

More students believed, reflected by an upward trend of four to five percentage points in the survey categories, that evaluations *are important enough to respond carefully and accurately* (76 compared to 72 percent), *are taken seriously by faculty* (40 percent compared to 36 percent) and *are taken seriously by students responding* (42 percent compared to 37 percent), *are needed in every class every semester* (48 percent compared to 43 percent), and *are influenced by teacher personality more than course content* (61 percent compared to 56 percent).

Students believed, reflected by an upward trend of seven percentage points in the category, that evaluations *are given at the right time of the semester* (74 percent compared to 67 percent). Students also believed, reflected by an upward shift of twelve percentage points in the category, that evaluations *are an important use of university funds* (44 percent compared to 32 percent).

Responses to three questions were not as clearly defined in either the 2000 or 1994 surveys. The 2000 survey also reflected that fewer believed, represented by a downward trend of nine percentage points in the category, that students *are influenced by course content more than teacher personality* (28 percent compared to 37 percent).

In the 2000 survey, 61 percent agreed evaluations *are influenced by teacher personality more than course content*, 17 percent disagreed, and 21 percent were undecided. In a reverse statement, evaluations *are influenced by course content more than teacher personality*, 28 percent agreed, 50 percent disagreed, and 31 percent were undecided.

The 2000 survey reflected that fewer believed, represented by a downward trend of four percentage points in the category, that students *are influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the quality of the course* (33 percent compared to 37 percent). In the 2000 survey, the students' responses were about evenly split between Agree, Undecided, and Disagree.

When students were asked to evaluate the teacher and course they were enrolled in at the time of the survey, their ratings included Excellent (32 percent compared to 28 in 1994); Very Good (38 percent compared to 40 percent); Average (22 percent compared to 25 percent); Below Average, (4 percent compared to 5 percent); and Poor (2 percent in both).

Students who responded to the survey in more than one class included 97 students (14 percent) in the 2000 survey as compared to 42 students (3 percent) in the 1994 survey.

When students were asked to evaluate the course and the teacher they were currently assessing, the ratings included Excellent (32 percent compared to 28 percent in 1994), Very Good (38 percent compared to 40 percent), Average (22 percent compared to 25 percent), Below Average (4 percent compared to 5 percent), and Poor (2 percent in both).

SUMMARY

Students in the 2000 and 1994 surveys demonstrated Agreement responses above a 60 percent level that faculty evaluations are used to improve instruction, were administered in a manner guarding student identity, and were given without faculty influence. Students agreed with these statements consistently in both surveys at about the same level (see Table 1).

Reflecting an upward trend of four or five percentage points in the 2000 survey categories, students responded that evaluations are important, are taken seriously by students and faculty, are needed in every class every semester, and are influenced by teacher personality more than course content.

Reflecting an upward trend of seven to twelve percentage points in the 2000 survey categories, students responded that evaluations are given at the right time of the semester and are an important use of university funds.

The 2000 survey reflected disagreement by a downward trend of four percentage points in response to the statement that students are influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the quality of the course.

There was also a downward trend of nine percentage points in response to the statement that students are influenced by course content more than teacher personality. These results may indicate the students in the 2000 survey believe teacher personality is more important than it was to the students in the 1994 survey.

Students were complementary of the course and teacher they were assessing in both surveys.

Table 1--Respondent Demographics and
Table 1--Respondent Demographics and Beliefs

Survey	2000		1994	
Questionnaires received (n)	707		1335	
1. Your classification this semester:	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Freshman	197	28	338	25.5
Sophomore	139	20	255	19.4
Junior	150	21	303	22.8
Senior	183	26	368	27.8
Graduate	23	3	60	4.5
Omits	14	2		
2. Gender:				
Male	278	39	595	44.9
Female	413	58	728	55.1
Omits	16	2		
3. Indicate in which school your degree program is located.				
Undecided	47	7	77	5.9
Arts and Sciences	207	29	305	23.3
Business	64	9	165	12.5
Education	139	20	388	29.4
Health Sciences	238	34	382	28.9
Omits	11	2		
4. Mark the range that contains your cumulative grade point average.				
3.6--4.0	155	22	28	2.2
3.1--3.5	227	32	220	17
2.6--3.0	203	29	419	32.4
2.1--2.5	87	12	430	33.3
1.0--2.0	15	2	195	15.1
Omits	19	3		
5. Indicate the overall evaluation of the course and teacher that you evaluated on the course evaluation sheet.				
Excellent	226	32	370	28
Very good	271	38	526	39.9
Average	156	22	329	24.9
Below average	26	4	67	5.1
Poor	11	2	27	2
Omits	17	2		

Table 1--Respondent Demographics and Beliefs

	2000		1994	
6. are an important tool to improve instruction.	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Strongly Agree	193	27	272	20.6
Agree	285	40	579	43.9
Undecided	126	18	225	17.1
Disagree	63	9	188	14.4
Strongly Disagree	33	5	53	4
Omits	5	1		
7. are an important use of university funds.				
Strongly Agree	92	13	100	7.6
Agree	220	31	389	29.6
Undecided	207	29	408	30.9
Disagree	116	16	282	21.4
Strongly Disagree	69	10	137	10.5
Omits	2	0		
8. are important enough to me that I read the evaluation carefully and respond accurately to each question.				
Strongly Agree	207	29	320	25.4
Agree	334	47	579	46.1
Undecided	69	10	176	14
Disagree	67	9	134	10.8
Strongly Disagree	26	4	47	3.7
Omits	4	1		
9. are taken seriously by university faculty.				
Strongly Agree	98	14	117	9
Agree	184	26	357	27.5
Undecided	224	32	446	34.3
Disagree	108	15	255	19.5
Strongly Disagree	88	12	126	9.7
Omits	5	1		
10. are influenced by teacher personality more than course content.				
Strongly Agree	148	21	186	14.3
Agree	285	40	543	41.6
Undecided	146	21	319	24.5
Disagree	100	14	218	16.8

Strongly Disagree	23	3	37	2.8
Omits	4	1		

Table 1--Respondent Demographics and Beliefs

	2000		1994	
11. are influenced by course content more than teacher personality.	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Strongly Agree	53	7	83	6.3
Agree	145	21	288	22
Undecided	219	31	425	32.5
Disagree	233	33	424	32.5
Strongly Disagree	53	7	88	6.8
Omits	3	0		
12. are administered in a manner which strictly guards student identity.				
Strongly Agree	236	33	378	29
Agree	302	43	593	45.6
Undecided	110	16	213	16.3
Disagree	36	5	80	6.2
Strongly Disagree	17	2	38	2.9
Omits	6	1		
13. are influenced by a student's grade in the course more than the quality of the course.				
Strongly Agree	56	8	93	7
Agree	180	25	389	29.5
Undecided	187	26	383	29.2
Disagree	212	30	360	27.3
Strongly Disagree	65	9	91	7
Omits	6	1		
14. are needed in every class every semester.				
Strongly Agree	161	23	228	17.3
Agree	175	25	340	25.9
Undecided	156	22	328	25
Disagree	134	19	274	20.9
Strongly Disagree	75	11	144	10.9
Omits	6	1		
15. are influenced by the ability of the faculty to establish a climate of positive communication more than by the student's grade.				
Strongly Agree	116	16	145	11.3
Agree	290	41	549	42.8
Undecided	214	30	422	33

Disagree	60	8	127	9.9
Strongly Disagree	20	3	37	3
Omits	6	1		

Table 1--Respondent Demographics and Beliefs

	2000		1994	
16. are taken seriously by the students who are responding.	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Strongly Agree	83	12	110	8.4
Agree	209	30	379	28.9
Undecided	194	27	378	29.1
Disagree	162	23	333	25.4
Strongly Disagree	56	8	106	8.2
Omits	3	0		
17. are given at the appropriate time of the semester.				
Strongly Agree	154	22	210	16
Agree	369	52	671	51.2
Undecided	110	16	259	19.8
Disagree	46	7	115	9
Strongly Disagree	21	3	51	3.9
Omits	6	1		
18. are given with faculty outside the room and without influence of faculty.				
Strongly Agree	303	43	491	37.3
Agree	294	42	605	46.2
Undecided	63	9	135	10.4
Disagree	23	3	57	4.3
Strongly Disagree	16	2	23	1.7
Omits	8	1		
19. I have responded to this survey in another class.				
Yes	97	14	42	3.3
No	582	82	1220	96.7
Omits	27	4		